

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Partnership/Initiative: Building the Capacity of Caribbean NGOs and CBOs to respond effectively to critical Sustainable Development Needs

Expected date of initiation: June 2000 (Pilot Phase); January 2003 (First Phase)

Expected date of completion: January 2003 (Pilot Phase); January 2005 (First Phase)

Partners Involved:

Governments: Governments of all currently participating countries (Antigua, St Lucia, Grenada, St Vincent, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname and Guyana). Government sanction and support is a prerequisite for participation with the GEF SGP, UNDP, CREP and ICRAN. Government representatives sit on the National Steering Committees and UNVs work with government counterparts. Other governments will become involved as the programme expands during the First Phase. These relationships are still being negotiated.

Intergovernmental organizations: United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Volunteers; International Coral Reef Action Network; Caribbean Regional Environment Programme; and Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP).

Major NGO groups: Conservation International; Environmental Awareness Group, Antigua; St Lucia National Trust; GRENCODA, Grenada; Environmental Protection Agency, Guyana.

Other: All NGO and Community Based Organisations (CBO) engaged in the GEF SGP, UNDP Poverty Programme, CREP and ICRAN programmes in programme countries.

Leading Partner:

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative

The main objective of this initiative is to build the organisational management capacity of NGOs and CBOs engaged in Sustainable Development activities in the Caribbean region through providing technical support with National United Nations Volunteers.

Past experience of development initiatives in the Caribbean region has shown the capacity of civil society to participate in governance issues is weak. Concomitantly, without participation, all forms of social development, from management of the HIV AIDS virus, environmental protection and governance, to micro-credit schemes and other livelihood opportunities, are unlikely to be successful or sustainable in the mid/long term.

For this reason, in 2000, UNV placed 7 NUNVs with strategically selected NGOs and CBOs engaged in the GEF SGP and UNDP Poverty Alleviation programmes. These two programmes

are investing in the long-term sustainable development of civil society through the provision of financing and guidance to NGOs and CBOs working to improve environmental management issues balanced with sustainable income-generation. Both programmes were experiencing problems due to the capacity of grant recipients to execute projects.

With UNVs extensive experience in community based initiatives, the three agencies agreed to join forces to address Caribbean civil society's ability to engage in projects, address their own development needs and translate global concepts into local actions. Inter-agency collaboration was the cornerstone of the approach. UNV placements were made within Host NGOs, CBOs, UN units and quasi-government agencies. UNVs also worked with other organisations including government counterpart staff and inter/national agencies. The regional collaborative opportunities afforded by placing and linking UNVs under a regional thematic programme, to the regional issue of weak social capacity, was one of the key programme benefits.

Due to these benefits as well as many others demonstrated during the Pilot Phase of the project, UNV, its original partners, together with two other regional programmes, CREP and ICRAN, are endeavouring to strengthen regional cooperation and execution in the field of conservation management by coming together to expand the pilot project to their programmes.

UNV is proposing a Type 2 initiative to expand the demonstrated benefits the Pilot programme brought to the GEF SGP and UNDP, along with the many other organisations and people engaged in programmes supported by these agencies, in the Caribbean sub-region. UNV is ready to expand the programme to new regions and new partners and is currently negotiating with other regional organisations who experience execution difficulties due to the low capacity of local/community partners.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: The programme described above works to achieve the objectives of both Agenda 21 and the UN Millennium Development Goals. Specifically, it speaks to ensuring the Millennium Development Goal of ensuring environmental sustainability. The programme also contributes to addressing the poverty often found in rural and isolated areas, where people are reliant on access to a fragile and depleting natural resource base, such as coral reefs, wetlands, and forest systems.

The project encapsulates the spirit of the principles of Agenda 21 and cross-cuts every thematic sector. In particular, this initiative supports the goals of Section III, Strengthening the Role of Major Groups, the main objective of this partnership initiative.

Expected results:

Increased participation of civil society and government counterparts in sustainable development initiatives leading to improved conservation management in the areas of biodiversity, international waters, climate change and ozone depletion, together with improved quality of life and opportunities for local communities.

Achievement of results will be indicated through the following means such as requests for assistance from local groups; the timely disbursement of funds from GEF SGP, UNDP, CREP and ICRAN programmes; timely execution of projects; increased networks at the local level; more management plans and active management of local areas/species; collaborative agreements with government; financial sustainability of projects post funding phases; a cadre of ex-NUNVs

with experience and increased networking opportunities; number of training/workshops held; upscaling of projects; increased participation of civil society in governance matters; improved monitoring, reporting and transfer of information in the Caribbean.

The programme ultimately aims to strengthen regional collaboration among the SIDS (where organisational representation may not be found on each individual island), and where it is critical for international partners to coordinate their efforts, while at the same time placing emphasis on building local ownership/partnerships.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

- Expand current programme throughout the Caribbean region and Central America, building on established relationships with GEF SGP and UNDP (2002 - 2005).
- Expand the range of partners in order to focus scarce resources in a complementary manner while working with other major agencies/programmes on a country-specific basis (for instance, working with the UNEP in Central America and Jamaica where they have active programmes) (2002-2005).
- Extend and strengthen the current pilot programme by introducing NUNV Field Workers and continue to use pilot countries to test new methods and approaches to building capacity (2002-2005).
- Build a cadre of national technical experts in the areas of community participation and sustainable development in the Caribbean region (2005).
- ‘Successful’ community led conservation/environmental management projects in each island with a variety of models for improving livelihoods and quality of life. These models, or their processes, are being transferred to other areas (2005).

Coordination and Implementation mechanism

UNV ARLAC section, Germany, will be responsible for the execution of the project. At the regional levels, Regional Coordinators will be responsible for all operational issues such as training, recruitment, specific country programmes and project issues. At the national level, the UNV Management Team, comprised of the UNV Programme Officer and Country Office Assistant (based within the UNDP Country Office in each country), is responsible for administrative and personal matters of UNVs.

Regional Coordinators would meet at regular intervals and visit each others programmes to enable lessons to be shared, to ensure coordination and not duplication of programme activities as well as discussing partnerships and future opportunities.

The National Steering Committee

A National Volunteer Steering Committee guides the UNV programme in every country. The National Steering Committee is comprised of representative NGOs, government departments, academic institutions, the private sector and UN agencies. National Steering Committees report to the UN Resident Coordinator and guide the direction of UNV programme development, establish Allowance Rates, advise on Insurance Schemes and keep the Resident Coordinator informed on local development issues.

Reporting

Overall management of UNVs is the responsibility of the UNDP Resident Representative.

NUNVs report directly both to the Host Agency as well as the UNV Regional Programme Coordinator. UNVs submit leave, initial and annual reports to the UNV Programme Officer

located within their country.

Arrangements for funding

The Pilot Phase of the programme (2001 - 2003) was funded by UNV and administrative support was provided by UNDP. The objective of the pilot programme was to attract counterpart contributions once the benefits of the approach were demonstrated. At this stage partners are being approached and funding sources identified.

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

As noted earlier, this partnership initiative is to build the capacity of local people to engage in sustainable development programmes. Training for both UNVs and other key stakeholders, such as government counterparts, NGOs and CBOs, is integral to the projects success. Training costs for project groups are covered within their project budgets (GEF SGP, UNDP Poverty Programme, CREP, ICRAN etc.). Training costs for government counterparts and UNVs are addressed within the partnership arrangement. It should be noted that training has been a key activity, for both UNV as well as other stakeholder groups, during the Pilot Phase.

TYPES OF TRAINING INCLUDE:

- Business planning, organisational management, institutional monitoring.
- Needs assessment for capacity building.
- Skills in project formulation, management, implementation activities, monitoring and evaluation.
- Resource mobilisation (financial as well as non-financial).
- Networking, information sharing and dissemination.
- Environmental education.
- Environmental decision making at the local, national and international levels.
- CBO and NGO Exchanges.

Please also provide here a brief description of expected arrangements for technology transfer: At this stage there have not been many projects that include technology components. Two alternative energy projects have used solar panels and it is hoped that this field, together with reduction of pesticides and coral reef/coastal management, will begin to emerge during the First Phase. Transferring knowledge, or lessons learned, is critical to the long term sustainability of the island resource base whether it be technology, process or market information.

It raises the issue of communications and transfer of knowledge and experience to others as well as internal communications. Who is doing what? And where? For programmes with multiple partners, involving many countries, communications becomes even more critical. Communications becomes particularly challenging in the context of SIDS, who are geographically isolated islands with limited access to computer technology, often unreliable phone networks and still retain a strong reliance on the radio, newspaper and word-of-mouth. To this end, a Communications Strategy was developed during the Pilot Phase. Communications activities included the development of a web-page, t-shirts, newsletters, email list-serves, frequent radio and newspaper features and international exposure at conferences.

To reflect the expanded scale and number of partners in the programme, a Communications Strategy for the First Phase of the project will be developed.

Inter-agency communications at the field level will be an important component of the Communications Strategy. UNV has websites, portals, newsletters and other means for the UNVs to exchange information. This is important to build knowledge networks, exchange information,

and access the technical expertise of UNVs serving around the world. UNVs are also connected to other UNVs working in their country who may not be in the same field. An example of how these networks can function is, when a UNV working in the environment sector is in remote communities they may see areas of need, such as HIV AIDS, computer training, agricultural extension needs or adult literacy, and can inform other UNV colleagues.

The other partners (GEF SGP, UNDP, CREP and ICRAN) also have communications mechanisms and these need to be assessed, along with the systems UNV can provide, to determine the most efficient methods for servicing this partnership initiative during the First Phase.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)

As described above, this partnership initiative is designed to strengthen the on-going sustainable development activities of the GEF SGP (international), UNDP (international), ICRAN (international) and CREP (regional). These programmes have sustainability requirements as part of their programmes. 'Sustainability' will be a key factor in determining the selection of partners as the scope of the First Phase is established.

Monitoring Arrangements

Please describe expected arrangements for monitoring of progress in the implementation of Partnerships/Initiative after it will be launched at the WSSD:

(e.g. frequency/modalities of preparation of progress reports; electronic updates, news-letters, etc)

Programme Level

Monitoring the programme is the responsibility of the UNV Regional Coordinators and UNV ARLAC section. Progress reports are submitted by the UNV Regional Coordinators bi-annually, to UNV ARLAC, who report to donors and partners as required.

Monitoring mechanisms to facilitate communications between partners, such as virtual meetings, will be used to ensure future programming is informed by the findings/results of bi-annual reporting.

A Mid Term Review will be conducted January 2004.

A Final Programme Evaluation will be conducted January 2005.

Again, mechanisms to ensure partners are informed and efforts are well coordinated will be developed as the partner base expands.

The programme has a website (information below) for the public and other organisations to monitor achievements and developments.

Project Level

Monitoring reports are submitted from NUNVs on a bi-annual basis.

All NUNVs receive access to the internet on a weekly basis and have frequent informal correspondence with their Regional Coordinator.

NUNVs receive monitoring visits from their Regional Coordinator at least once a year and receive monitoring visits from their UNV Programme Officer at least twice a year. This is the most cost-efficient means of physically monitoring progress in the SIDS context (where the UNV

Programme Officer visits ALL UNVs on the island).

The NUNVs are also placed with a Host Agency (the in-country NGO partner) who take responsibility for the daily supervision and management of the UNV. The Host Agency monitor the NUNV and report directly to the Regional Coordinator.

Again, multiple agencies and multiple countries, make the management issues of reporting and monitoring complex. The systems we have developed during the Pilot Phase of the programme have been streamlined with experience and are underpinned by the principle that **roles and responsibilities must be clear**. Once all parties understand what they must do and how it will be done, and formats are compatible and feed into each other, monitoring and reporting are demystified and the information can be used for informed decision-making.

Other relevant information: In the information provided on this partnership initiative, three main points should be apparent. They are:

- Communications
- Training
- Support

These three elements are featured at all level of the partnership initiative, from programme management, through to individual group projects.

The rationale behind this partnership initiative is it aims to address issues of weak social capacity and technical expertise in the socio-environmental sectors throughout the Caribbean by providing UNV voluntary experiences within established global, regional and UNDP programmes. The partnership initiative is based on the premise NGO and CBO groups who receive support, and have strengthened organisational, networking and project management capacity, will be better equipped to achieve long term organisational sustainability. The aim of the initiative is to address pressing environmental management, conservation and sustainable livelihood issues, through building a cadre of regional technical experts in sectors where it is recognised the regional skill-base is currently inadequate.

Web-site: www.undp.org.tt/unvenvironment

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